

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please substitute the enclosed Figure 7 for the corresponding Figure on file. Figure 7 has been amended to include the label "Prior Art" as requested by the Examiner. No new matter is introduced by the amendments.

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering the application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-11 are pending in the present application. By way of this reply, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the entire back surface of the hard base is not in contact with any member other than the keypad. Support for these amendments can be found, for example, in Figure 1 and the accompanying text. No new matter has been added by the amendments. Claim 1 is independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1.

Objection(s) to the drawings

The drawings have been objected to for informalities. By this reply, Figure 7 has been amended to include the label "Prior Art" as requested by the Examiner. In addition, the Examiner has indicated that insulative materials are not shown in the drawings. However, the Applicant respectfully notes that no insulative materials are recited in the claims. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Objection to the Abstract

The abstract was objected to for informalities. By way of this reply, the abstract has been amended to delete all numerals and meet the requirement for a proper abstract. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Objection(s) to the Claims

Claims 3 and 5 stand objected to because of informalities. By this reply, claim 5 has been amended to address the concerns raised by the Examiner. With respect to claim 3, the Applicant respectfully notes that the key top has proper antecedent basis because a key top is recited in claim 1. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,021,630 ("Taylor"). By way of this reply, claim 1 has been amended. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claim, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Embodiments disclosed in this application relate to a cover member for a push-button switch. In accordance with one embodiment shown in Figure 1, the keypad 2 is formed on the hard base 1, and thinly covers the entire back surface of the hard base 1. Because the keypad 2 may be made of elastic material, for example, a silicone rubber film, it can protect the hard base 1 and other adjacent solid members. In one embodiment, the keypad 2 made of a silicone rubber film is formed between the hard base 1 and a circuit board and, thus, hard members including the hard base and the circuit board are prevented from being in direct contact. Advantageously, such circuit board can be protected from mechanical shock or damage (*see e.g.*, paragraphs [0058], [0067] of the published specification).

Accordingly, amended independent claim 1 requires, in part, that the keypad is made of a silicone rubber film, and a front surface of the keypad is in contact with an entire back

surface of the hard base, thereby preventing the entire back surface of the hard base from being in contact with any member other than the keypad.

Taylor is directed to a resilient contact switch. With respect to Taylor, the Examiner has equated the retaining sleeve 25 and the flexible cap 10 of Taylor with the hard base and the keypad recited in claim 1 (*see* the instant Office Action, page 3). However, as clearly shown in Figure 1 of Taylor, the flexible cap 10 is *not* in contact with the entire back surface of the retaining sleeve 25. Rather, it is noted that part of the back surface of the retaining sleeve 25 is in contact with the circuit board 12 and, in fact, this configuration of contact switch in Taylor teaches away from preventing a hard base from being in contact with other solid members and protecting a circuit board. Therefore, Taylor fails to show or teach at least that the keypad is made of a silicone rubber film, and a front surface of the keypad is in contact with an entire back surface of the hard base, thereby preventing the entire back surface of the hard base from being in contact with any member other than the keypad, as required by amended independent claim 1.

In view of the above, Taylor fails to disclose all limitations of independent claim 1. Claim 1 is therefore patentable over Taylor. Dependent claims are also patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) Under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claims 3 and 6

Claims 3 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taylor in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,367,133 ("Schmidt"). For the reasons set forth below, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 3 and 6 depend from independent claim 1. As discussed above, Taylor fails to show or suggest all limitations of independent claim 1. Further, Schmidt does not teach that which Taylor lacks. This is evidenced by the fact that Schmidt is only relied upon for teaching a keytop made of a hard resin.

In view of the above, Taylor and Schmidt, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest all limitations of claims 3 and 6. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 5

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taylor in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,995,126 ("Larson"). For the reasons set forth below, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 5 depends from independent claim 1. As discussed above, Taylor fails to show or suggest all limitations of independent claim 1. Further, Larson does not teach that which Taylor lacks. This is evidenced by the fact that Larson is only relied upon for teaching the use of a plurality of switches.

In view of the above, Taylor and Larson, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest all limitations of claim 5. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 7, and 9-11

Claims 4, 7, and 9-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taylor in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,366,805 ("Fujiki"). For the reasons set forth below, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 4, 7, and 9-11 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1. As discussed above, Taylor fails to show or suggest all limitations of independent claim 1. Further, Fujiki does not teach that which Taylor lacks. This is evidenced by the fact that Fujiki is only relied upon for teaching the manufacture of an electrical component formed of a polycarbonate resin and a selectively adhesive silicone rubber.

In view of the above, Taylor and Fujiki, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest all limitations of claims 4, 7, and 9-11. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 8

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taylor and Schmidt in view of Fujiki. For the reasons set forth below, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 8 depends indirectly from independent claim 1. As discussed above, Taylor and Schmidt fail to show or suggest all limitations of independent claim 1. Further, Fujiki does not teach that which Taylor and Schmidt lack. This is evidenced by the fact that Fujiki is only relied upon for teaching the manufacture of an electrical component formed of a polycarbonate resin and a selectively adhesive silicone rubber.

In view of the above, Taylor, Schmidt, and Fujiki, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to show or suggest all limitations of claim 8. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 07200/083001).

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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Attachments